

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 153701

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO NAIROBI FROM MOGADISCIO
JUN 30

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L MOGADISCIO 0922

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, SO, US

SUBJECT: SOVIET BASE ISSUE: GSDR RESTRICTS ACCESS

1. JOURNALISTS WHO VISITED BERBERA JUNE 28 -- INCLUDING
ABC TELEVISION TEAM -- WERE DENIED ACCESS TO MISSILE
STORAGE AND SERVICING FACILITY. WE HAVE REPORT THAT ABC
FILM CREW WAS NOT RPT NOT ALLOWED TO TAKE FILM FOOTAGE.
WHILE WE DO NOT RPT NOT POSSESS ALL DETAILS AS YET,
FOLLOWING INFORMATION WAS PASSED TO US EVENING OF JUNE
29 BY AMERICAN JOURNALISTS.

2. GSDR TOOK TEAM OF JOURNALISTS TO BERBERA JUNE 28.
INCLUDED IN GROUP WERE REPORTERS FROM REUTERS, UPI, LE
MONDE, DAILY NATION, EAST AFRICAN STANDARD, AND ABC TV
CREW. JOURNALISTS SUCCEEDED IN GETTING GSDR HOSTS TO TAKE
THEM TO MISSILE STORAGE AND HANDLING FACILITY BUT OUTER
GATE WAS LOCKED AND SOMALI HOSTS SAID KEY NOT RPT NOT
AVAILABLE. WE UNDERSTAND ABC TV TEAM WAS NOT RPT NOT
ALLOWED TO TAKE FILM FOOTAGE. MOST VIGOROUS PROTESTS
REGARDING DENIAL OF ACCESS CAME FROM REUTERS AND UPI REPS
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AND WE HAVE RECEIVED UNCONFIRMED REPORT THAT SOME SORT OF

ALTERCATION TOOK PLACE AT GATE.

3. JOURNALISTS LEFT BERBERA WITHOUT SEEING MISSILE HANDLING FACILITY. SINCE THEY DID NOT RPT NOT RETURN TO MOGADISCIO ON SAME DAY, SOME JOURNALISTS PREPARED STORIES REPORTING INCIDENTS AT BERBERA AND GAVE COPY TO MININFO OFFICIALS WHO WERE RETURNING IMMEDIATELY TO MOGADISCIO AND ASKED THAT STORIES BE FILED WITH POST AND TELEGRAPH.

4. WHEN JOURNALISTS RETURNED TO MOGADISCIO JUNE 29, HOWEVER, MININFO HAD NOT RELEASED STORIES. THOSE JOURNALISTS WHO IMMEDIATELY ATTEMPTED FILE STORIES ON THEIR OWN WERE TOLD LINE WAS OUT. EAST AFRICA FLIGHT TO NAIROBI WHICH WAS TO TAKE ABC FILM CREW JUNE 29 WAS CANCELLED.

5. EVENING OF JUNE 29 AND MORNING OF JUNE 30, RADIO MOGADISCIO CARRIED RADIO COMMENTARY ALLEGING THAT AMONG JOURNALISTS IN GROUP WERE THOSE WHO HAD COME TO SPY ON SOMALI NAVAL INSTALLATIONS.

6. JUNE 30 ISSUE OF SOMALI NEWS BULLETIN (SONNA) CARRIED FOLLOWING STATEMENT FROM MININFO AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE WHICH HAD BEEN RELEASED JUNE 29:

QTE SPOKESMAN FOR MIN INFO AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE TODAY
S
ID THAT SOLE AIM BEHIND INVITATION OF FOREIGN JOURNALISTS TO NORTHERN PORT OF BEBERA WAS TO LET THEM SEE FOR THEMSELVES THAT NO FOREIGN MILITARY BASE EXISTS IN THAT AREA.

QTE HOWEVER, THE SPOKESMAN WENT ON, PURPOSE OF INVITATION DID NOT RPT NOT MEAN THAT JOURNALISTS WHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO SEE AND COUNT SOMALIA'S NAVAL WEAPONRY IN AREA.

QTE IT HAS BEEN DISCLOSED THAT PURPOSE OF WESTERN PRESSMEN WHO YESTERDAY VISITED BERBERA WAS NOT RPT NOT TO VERIFY EXISTENCE OF BASE BUT WERE RATHER INTERESTED TO KNOW THE DETAILS OF THE WEAPONS OF SOMALI NAVY.

QTE THERE IS NO RPT NO NATION THAT IS OBLIGED TO DISPLAY
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ITS ARMAMENTS TO FOREIGN JOURNALISTS AND SOMALIA IS NOT RPT NOT AN EXCEPTION BECAUSE THAT IS TANTAMOUNT TO INFRINGEMENT ON OUR SOVEREIGN RIGHTS.

QTE SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT MANY JOURNALISTS WHO HAD SINCERE MOTIVES WERE SHOWN AROUND BERBERA AND ACTUALLY BECAME CONVINCED THAT THERE WAS NO RPT NO BASE AS CLAIMED BY US DEFENSE DEPARTMENT.

QTE EARLIER THIS WEEK THREE MAN TV TEAM FROM COLUMBIA
BROADCASTING SYSTEM (CBS) WHO HAVE VISITED BERBERA DECLARED
THAT THEY SAW NO BASE AT ALL.

QTE THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THE BASE WHICH THE US GOVERNMENT
CLAIMS TO EXIST IN SOMALIA COULD NOT RPT NOT BE CONFOUNDED
WITH ANY OTHER THING. UNQTE

7. SEVERAL US NEWSMEN -- HENRY TANNER OF NY TIMES, DUSKO DODER
OF WASHINGTON POST, AND MULLEN OF US NEWS WORLD REPORT --
ARRIVED MOGADISCIO JUNE 29 AND ARE AWAITING MININFO SPONSORED
TRIP TO BERBERA. THEY WILL PROBABLY BE SIMILARLY RESTRICTED
IN THEIR ACCESS TO BERBERA FACILITIES.

8. SAME RESTRICTIONS WILL NO DOUBT APPLY IN VISIT OF US SENATORS
AND CONGRESSMEN.
HAMRICK
UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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